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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KRENKEL	(Austria)
later:	Mr. DEKANY (Vice-Chairman)	(Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Mrs. RAOELINA (Madagascar) said that women represented a major human resource in Madagascar, since they constituted the majority of the workforce. Though the Constitution and laws provided women with the same rights as men, those provisions were not fully implemented because of residual discrimination stemming from traditional practices. Often, women were unaware of their rights under the law, and increasing their legal literacy should become a global priority. Furthermore, all women must receive a basic level of education in order to fulfil their role as educators of children.

2. Her delegation regretted the lack of progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the period up to the year 2000 in the priority areas of equality, development and peace and the subthemes employment, health and education. In the developing countries, particularly in Africa, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and poor economic conditions continued to be obstacles to their implementation. The 1995 World Conference on Women should determine the measures to be taken to remove those obstacles. Its principal goal should be the improvement of the well-being of women in all areas, particularly in health, education and economic participation. Although it was the responsibility of each State to define the role of women in its national development, the international community, through concerted efforts, should provide favourable conditions for the achievement of those development goals.

The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.20 a.m.

3. Mr. SERGIWA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that despite the vital role played by women in the process of socio-economic development, their unequal status remained unchanged in many countries and they were still grossly underrepresented in public life. As stated in the Secretary-General's report on the advancement of women (A/47/377), the elimination of de facto and de jure discrimination against women would require visible political and economic commitment by Governments and non-governmental organizations. His Government affirmed the importance of eliminating that discrimination, acknowledging women's rights and ensuring that women took part in decision-making and were fully integrated in development activities. In that connection, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had played a commendable role; he therefore hoped that those States which had not already acceded to the Convention would soon do so.

4. Member States, government agencies and non-governmental organizations should ensure swift implementation of the ambitious programmes contained in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. With that aim in mind, his delegation had supported convening the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It

(Mr. Sergiwa, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

thanked the Government of China for offering to host the Conference, and noted that it should be well-prepared to ensure its success.

5. The elimination of violence against women, which was a viclation of basic human rights, was a prerequisite if women were to achieve equality and enjoy their rights and freedoms. His delegation therefore supported the efforts made in that direction by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and hoped that the draft declaration drawn up by the working group of the Commission would be supported by the General Assembly at its next session. It also welcomed the decisions reached by the Third Committee concerning the situation of women living under occupation or racist regimes. In that connection, he referred to Economic and Social Council resolutions 15/1992 and 16/1992, which called upon the regimes in South Africa and the occupied Palestinian territories respectively to take various forms of action aimed at improving the situation of the women and children living in those areas, which was the consequence of repressive government measures.

6. His delegation commended the efforts of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to help women in developing countries, particularly in Africa, to acquire the skills and expertise which would enable them to participate more fully and vigorously in the development process. It also praised the work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for its work over the past year related to training and study grants, as well as documentation and statistics on the advancement of women. It likewise supported measures designed to improve the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat and increase the number of women employees, particularly in decision-making posts. In that respect, women from the developing countries, who were currently under-represented, should have equal representation with those from the developed countries.

7. In contrast with the situation in the past, Libyan women today enjoyed full rights under legislation designed to eliminate discrimination against women. Women were now excluded only from laborious or dangerous tasks. The free universal education system in Libya also played a significant role in enhancing women's ability to take decisions and compete with men on an equal basis. Libya was committed to implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which it had acceded in 1989, and had achieved a great deal of progress in the advancement of women. As members of popular congresses, trade unions and professional associations, Libyan women participated on an equal footing with men in the decision-making process. They also had the same employment opportunities as men, even occupying top decision-making positions, as well as the right of ownership and the right to bear arms in defence of self, family and country.

(Mr. Sergiwa, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

8. He concluded by praising the efforts of the Division for the Advancement of Women in Vienna to promote implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and expressed the hope that it would receive the financial and human resources support needed to enable it to complete its tasks.

9. Ms. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), and looked forward to the timely implementation in its recommendations. Her delegation was disappointed at the decrease in the number of women at senior levels in the Secretariat over the past year, since the United Nations should be a leader in their integration into the decision-making process. Canada hoped that the resolution it would introduce on that subject would receive full support. The guidelines on sexual harassment to be issued by the Secretary-General must be in conformity with the highest standards established in Member States. The United Nations, as the protector of human rights throughout the world, must serve as a model in protecting the rights of its own staff.

10. Canada had recently submitted its third report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). More than 80 substantive reservations had been registered against the Convention, diminishing its impact. Her delegation encouraged countries to review their reservations in the hope of reducing that number. It also supported the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women should meet for three weeks each year until its backlog of reports had been liquidated.

11. Women's rights were an integral and indivisible part of universal human rights, and must be respected as such before any society could develop its political, social and economic potential. Canada, therefore, supported retaining an explicit reference to the full realization of all human rights of women and men in the agenda for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. Similarly, issues related to the advancement of women should be incorporated in the agendas of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the preparations for the International Year of the Family and the proposed world summit on social development in 1995.

12. Violence against women remained among the most pervasive and serious manifestations of human rights abuse. Canada welcomed the draft declaration on violence against women discussed at the recent inter-sessional meeting of the Working Group on Violence Against Women of the Commission on the Status of Women. The definition of arrived at by the Working Group would pave the way for the effective application of international human rights law in that area. Adoption of the draft declaration would be a universal acknowledgement of the existence of violence against women and would provide guidance to States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

(Ms. Frechette, Canada)

13. Canada strongly supported the 1995 World Conference on Women as an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and to plan how the task of achieving equality between women and men could be completed. Her delegation looked forward to the early appointment of a secretary-general of the conference to guide the preparatory work. Canada also strongly supported the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and of the focal point for women in the Secretariat, and reiterated the need for adequate human and financial resources to support those vital activities.

14. Mr. LECOGE (Botswana) said that the Government of Botswana recognized that progress in national development required the maximum participation of women in all its economic and social aspects. With that in mind, as early as 1981, the Government had established the Women's Affairs Division within the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, with the overall objective of facilitating the integration of women in development. With 80 per cent of the total population of Botswana living in rural areas and in economy based on agriculture, the bulk of farming was done by women. In addition, women were in the majority in administration. An interesting trend had developed in the construction business, with an increasing number of women employed as manual workers, mostly in urban centres, an indication that women were gradually gaining access to previously male-dominated sectors of the economy.

15. Despite the advances, the full participation of women in development continued to be hampered by a range of legal and economic constraints, including traditional attitudes that perpetuated their inferior status. While women outnumbered males, they occupied a disproportionate number of low-status positions, and few managed to climb the ladder to high-paying and high-status jobs. Politically, although the majority of voters were women, they still had difficulty reaching high political office; hence very few were involved in the decision-making process.

16. The availability of formal education for women was an area of concern to the Government and to development scholars. Women played a pivotal role in informal education, especially the socialization of the young, and helped elevate the literacy rate. However, formal schooling, while it was not the panacea for all social disparities, it was among the most important areas of development and could help to remedy social inequality.

17. Ms. Valle (Cuba) commended the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and congratulated the States that had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Much remained to be done, however, to overcome persistent discrimination against women and the obstacles to their participation in decision-making. Only an equitable international economic and social order would bring about real improvements in the status of women and the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

(Ms. Valle, Cuba)

18. Her delegation applauded the work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), especially its Participatory Action Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PAPLAC), focused on subregional strategies, the identification of new regional partners and assessment of associations, and the identification and linking of projects within subregional programmes.

19. Her delegation supported the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women, emphasizing the importance of preparatory activities and the role of the Commission on the Status of Women in organizing the Conference and planning a comprehensive working strategy. It joined other delegations in supporting that Commission's resolution 36/8 and urged the prompt appointment of a secretary-general of the Conference. The Conference should, moreover, be given sufficient resources and publicity, both at the preparatory stage and during the Conference itself. The Division for the Advancement of Women should be strengthened in anticipation of the work to prepare the relevant documentation. In that connection, the substantial structural changes in the Secretariat, particularly in the area of social development gave cause for concern, especially with regard to the mechanisms that would be responsible for improving efficiency and maintaining of high standard of work.

20. She concluded by noting that the revolutionary process in her country had enabled Cuban women to enjoy the tangible benefits to which women elsewhere in the world aspired.

21. Ms. DE MIRANDA (Suriname) said that implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women appeared to have lost impetus in recent years. Her delegation therefore welcomed the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women (resolution 36/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women) and the Commission's decision that the agenda of the Conference should include a specific Platform for Action. She expressed the hope that a first draft of the Platform would be available when the Commission next met. She also looked forward to the appointment, before the end of 1992, of a Secretary-General of the Conference, who should be a woman of international stature. Preparatory activities for the Conference were crucial. She welcomed the Commission's recommendation that non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be entitled to participate without restriction in the Conference and preparatory activities.

22. Her delegation fully supported the Commission on the Status of Women's resolution 36/5, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, concerning the importance of the effective mobilization of women for development.

23. Suriname was now completing the constitutional procedures enabling it to become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Her delegation supported the report of the

(Ms. De Miranda, Suriname)

eleventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, particularly general recommendation 19 concerning violence against women. It welcomed the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women prepared by the inter-sessional working group of the Commission on the Status of Women, and hoped that the adoption of that Declaration by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session would stimulate Member States' efforts to eliminate violence against women.

24. While she was appreciative of the detailed information contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), she hoped that the goals of a 35 per cent overall participation rate and a 25 per cent participation rate in posts at D-1 level would be reached by 1995. The creation of national rosters for women candidates could accelerate the recruitment of women within the Secretariat.

25. Her delegation was satisfied with the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as reported by the Secretary-General (A/47/340). Some of UNIFEM's operational projects and programmes had benefited her country.

26. The Government of Suriname had established a national programme for the advancement of women aimed at raising women's level of organization, stimulating their participation in policy-making and democratic structures and increasing their access to education, health, social welfare services and the legal professions. A national centre for women's affairs which cooperated with non-governmental women's organizations had been established. The Government recognized the need to widen the scope of the centre, but was experiencing difficulty in doing so on account of the country's economic problems.

27. Ms. AOKI (Japan) said that her delegation welcomed the decision of the Commission on the Status of Women to proceed with preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Conference would afford excellent opportunities for raising awareness about women's rights and their contribution to economic and social progress, and for revitalizing international efforts to promote implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and preparing the ground for further advances. The success of the Conference depended on the preparatory work. In her region, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had endorsed the convening of a regional preparatory meeting in May 1994. The Government of Japan had decided to fund the ESCAP project, which was designed to review and analyse the economic and social situation of women in the region and hoped that the ESCAP Secretariat would cooperate with the members of the Commission in preparing for the 1994 meeting. At the international level, a variety of activities were being undertaken on issues relating to women; the sharing of the results of those activities, which must be coordinated, would be a useful input to the forthcoming Conference. Her delegation looked forward to the appointment of the Secretary-General of the Conference, particularly in

(Ms. Aoki, Japan)

connection with the collection and dissemination of information. Preparatory work for the Conference must also be considered in the context of other major United Nations events in 1995 in order to ensure the full involvement of women. Participation by non-governmental organizations and individuals in the Conference was important in ensuring interaction and cooperation. Her delegation hoped that the proposal made by the representative of Kenya on rationalizing the work of the Conference would be given careful consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women.

28. Her delegation was pleased to note (A/47/368) that eight States had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since the Secretary-General's previous report on the subject. It urged those States that had not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention, and hoped that States which had expressed reservations on essential articles of the Convention would reconsider those reservations. With the increase in the number of States parties, the task of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in monitoring implementation of the Convention was becoming heavier. Japan supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/17 recommending the extension of the twelfth and subsequent sessions of the Committee to a third week until the backlog of State reports was liquidated, on the understanding that that was a temporary measure. Meanwhile, efforts must be made to improve the reporting system itself.

29. Further efforts were also needed to integrate women in development. In developing countries, the contribution of women was often overlooked and was not truly reflected in national development policies and programmes, while in developed countries women had little access to or control over production resources and were disadvantaged by insufficient educational and training opportunities. In 1992, the Government of Japan had adopted the Official Development Assistance Charter to inform the public about Japan's aid programme. The programme's effectiveness would depend on active participation by women in development and full enjoyment of the benefits they derived therefrom.

30. Her Government continued to support the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Japanese National Committee in support of UNIFEM would be established within a month. The preparatory committee, with representatives of 51 Japanese women's organizations, was currently preparing for the official inaugural meeting. The establishment of the National Committee was expected to mobilize wider support for the Fund and its activities.

31. Her delegation commended the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for its studies and statistical work on the situation of women; they would provide valuable inputs to the country reviews to be prepared for the World Conference. Her Government was exploring other modalities of cooperation with INSTRAW, for

(Ms. Aoki, Japan)

example, through recent contacts with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

32. As reported in document A/47/508, commendable efforts had been made to improve the situation of women in the Secretariat. Her delegation noted with approval that the Secretariat now explicitly stated that it would give preference to women candidates in recruitment. It remained, however, for Member States to put forward suitable women candidates. A point to be borne in mind when considering the status of women in the Secretariat was the observation that some women who rose to high positions assumed men's way of thinking and therefore did not necessarily promote the views of women. In addition to equal opportunity measures, efforts should be made to sensitize all staff members to gender differences. It was noteworthy that the Secretariat had begun to develop training programmes and other methods of enhancing such understanding. Further efforts were required along those lines.

33. Given the persistent gap between the de jure and de facto status of women throughout the world, preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women must provide an opportunity for reviewing the situation of women with renewed commitment to improve their status.

34. Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia) was pleased to reaffirm that Tunisia was in the vanguard of efforts to ensure the advancement of women, as demonstrated by the Tunisian Code of Personal Status, the philosophy of which was later reflected in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by his country in 1980. The Tunisian President had given further guarantees of the rights thus acquired by women by pledging that the improved position of women in society would be maintained, despite pressure from reactionary movements. New policy measures, announced in August 1992, would further improve the position of women in the areas of personal status, nationality, work and politics.

35. Measures adopted by the Government in the strategic areas of development had quickly borne fruit: Tunisian women enjoyed full equality with men in terms of rights and duties; they constituted part of the decision-making process and political life; and they were now more integrated in the economic process. Representing almost half of the total population, they had made a large contribution to the growth of vital sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture and services. The figures for illiteracy among women had been almost halved since 1966, while the percentage of females in full-time education had increased by over 30 per cent during the same period.

36. Nevertheless, many problems were still to be overcome, particularly in the rural areas, where, in common with other developing countries, poverty alleviation was a major objective. Improving the condition of rural women should constitute a basic principle of Tunisia's economic policies. As food providers, women should also be given access to modern agricultural technology and more credit. In that respect, bilateral and multilateral aid could play

(Mr. Khouini, Tunisia)

an effective role. Accordingly, his delegation wished to congratulate UNIFEM for its assistance to developing countries, particularly in Africa, aimed at integrating women in the development process by helping them to gain access to food technology and financing for small enterprises.

37. Unfortunately, the three main objectives articulated by the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies continued to be undermined by obstacles such as poverty, the debt burden and budget restrictions, particularly in the social sector, which affected the position of women. Moreover, in some parts of the world, improvement of that position was further threatened by the emergence of fundamentalist religious movements one of whose goals was to obstruct women's progress. His delegation remained convinced that such improvement was dependent on an improved economic situation and a commitment by the international community to defend human rights in general, and women's rights in particular, against trends detrimental to those rights. It was only under those conditions that the key objective of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies would be attained. His delegation therefore looked forward with great interest to the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was confident that the Conference would reinforce cooperation between the international community and the United Nations system with regard to the advancement of women.

38. Mr. SIDDIQ (Sudan) said that, within a few months, his Government would be acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was a major milestone in the advancement of women. As for the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, his delegation was convinced that its objectives could be achieved through intensified efforts at international, regional and local levels. Meanwhile, the fact that illegal discrimination against women continued should not deflect efforts to eliminate it for that goal could not be achieved overnight. In Sudan, as in the rest of the world, differences still persisted between men and women, despite protective legislation. His delegation believed, however, that those differences would be eliminated with the improved education and greater employment of women.

39. In the developing countries, the role of women in the development process was restricted by unfavourable economic circumstances caused by the external debt burden and the deteriorating standards of international trade. In Sudan, women had successfully secured rights which were now safeguarded under the Constitution. Almost three quarters lived in rural areas, where their illiteracy rate was extremely high, while among those in the urban areas, the illiteracy rate was much lower. In the field of higher education, however, girls accounted for 60 per cent of the enrolment figures. Although women represented over one quarter of the workforce in government offices, very few women occupied decision-making positions, a situation which might well change within the next decade.

(Mr. Siddig, Sudan)

40. The inequalities that persisted between men and women was compounded by the economic difficulties faced by Sudanese women. Clitorectomy, which was very common, particularly in rural areas, was another major problem even though it was forbidden under Islam and a crime punishable by law. In a determined bid to eradicate the practice, Government and non-governmental organizations had started an awareness campaign, which was being conducted through government employees, the media and women's organizations.

41. With the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in mind, his Government had formed a national consultative committee on women's affairs to advise on women's interests. Meanwhile, his delegation wished to thank the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for the work it had carried out, despite limited resources; women in Sudan had benefited a great deal from its research and training projects. It also commended the technical assistance given by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to women in the developing countries, particularly in agriculture and food production, and hoped that assistance would continue.

42. The Sudanese Government was coping with one million refugees, in addition to a further three million persons who were either displaced by the war in southern Sudan or victims of the country's drought. He stressed that it was working in full cooperation with United Nations agencies and other voluntary organizations to alleviate their suffering. Statistics on women's nutrition and health, however, reflected a dismal situation, and trying economic circumstances and insufficient international aid merely excerbated the suffering.

43. With reference to the Secretary-General's report on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), his delegation commended the efforts to increase the proportion of women and hoped that the desired results would be achieved by 1995. Finally, he expressed his appreciation to the Government of China for offering to host the Fourth World Conference on Women.

44. Mr. PARCHIKOV (Russian Federation) said that there was an obvious need to strengthen international cooperation at the governmental and non-governmental level in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The preparatory activities and convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 should give a powerful impetus to the efforts by States and organizations active in the social field to eliminate all discrimination against women.

45. Preparations for the World Conference had already begun in the Russian Federation; and an all-Russian conference on women, to be held at the end of the year, would consider, inter alia, the question of establishing a national preparatory committee for that purpose. A democratic society, toward which his country was striving, could be built only on the basis of equal opportunities for all men and women. The entire range of issues related to

(Mr. Parchikov, Russian Federation)

the status of women must be considered as an integral part of the question of human rights and the affirmation of the principles of freedom and equality.

46. The transition to a market economy in the Russian Federation had given rise to new problems affecting women, particularly unemployment and the feminization of poverty. Single mothers, single women of retirement age and women on childcare leave were among those living below the poverty level. The Ministry of Social Welfare dealt with their problems as a matter of priority; and his Government was currently developing a national mechanism for elaborating and implementing a State policy on women.

47. Consideration was also being given to a proposal to establish a special ministry for matters relating to women, families and children and to set up special subdivisions to deal with various aspects of the status of women in federal and territorial bodies. Furthermore, there had been a significant increase in the number of women's non-governmental organizations, associations and movements. Their activities had to be better coordinated and their financial basis had to be strengthened. The informal discussion held with the participation of experts on the status of women had provided useful statistical and analytical data which could be utilized in United Nations programmes and national efforts for the advancement of women. It was hoped that similar meetings would be held in future.

48. Ms. KHAPARDE (India) said that notwithstanding the difficulties facing women, including gender-based violence, there was a growing awareness among women of their rights and the need for empowerment as responsible decision-makers in society. The report of the Secretary-General on the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (A/47/377) provided useful insights as to why the Strategies had not been fully implemented. In spite of the enactment of national legislation guaranteeing equal status for women, negative social attitudes had not changed and discrimination against women continued in most societies. Accordingly, women must be made more aware of their rights through education and the activities of women's organizations and poverty, which impeded the advancement in many developing countries, must be eradicated in order to achieve real freedom, democracy and equality. In India women's movements dealing with the environment, literacy, economic advancement and human rights had existed for many decades and were rooted in Gandhi's philosophy.

49. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women could be a landmark in world-wide action for the advancement of women. The proposed medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 and its integration into the Nairobi Strategies would also ensure a global commitment and the continuation of the Strategies.

50. There was a growing awareness of women's rights in both urban and rural areas of India. A strongly supportive press and an enlightened judiciary stressed the need to empower women and address their problems. The number of

(Ms. Khaparde, India)

women's organizations in India had increased substantially and there was growing concern about crimes committed against women and the need to include women's issues in policy-making and development activities.

51. While the Indian Constitution ensured equality of rights and privileges for women, the absence of a uniform civil code was a great detriment to the exercise of women's rights in the country. Her Government appreciated in particular the work carried out in India by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which supported efforts to help women to participate in a more dynamic development process. The Fund's assistance to women in income-generating activities was of particular significance. In the Asia and Pacific region, UNIFEM broadened opportunities for women's participation, strengthened the capacity of key institutions in that regard and promoted greater awareness of the rights of rural women.

52. The Indian Government had established the National Commission for Women to ensure representation of women in all fields and redress of their grievances. The Commission monitored all matters relating to legal safeguards for women and reviewed existing legislation providing those guarantees. The aim of the National Perspective Plan for Women was to draw up a long-term policy for Indian women with particular emphasis on development. India's National Committee on Women was made up of representatives of women's organizations, the media, the legal profession and educational institutions. Her country also had plans to promote regional cooperation with neighbouring countries in the field of women's development.

53. Mr. Dekany (Hungary) took the Chair.

54. Mr. ANDRIAKA (Ukraine) said that outmoded stereotypes about the role of women in society unfortunately prevented their full participation in the development process. Accordingly, the international community must focus on implementing the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteeing equality of men and women.

55. The United Nations and other international organizations had done much to eliminate discrimination and enhance the status of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a basis for international cooperation in that regard. It was gratifying to note that the number of States parties to the Convention had increased and that countries that were not parties had amended their legislation to eliminate de jure discrimination against women. Nevertheless, de facto discrimination remained and the international community must endeavour to eradicate it.

56. The system of monitoring implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies was improving, but the pace of implementation had slowed. Yet, various international organizations were giving more attention to the problems of women and had increased the representation of women in professional and high-level posts. The work carried out by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was commendable.

(Mr. Andriaka, Ukraine)

57. The 1995 Fourth World Conference for Women should give fresh impetus to activities aimed at enhancing the status of women and creating equal opportunities and equitable partnership between men and women. His delegation supported the preparations for the Conference set forth in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/377) and the related activities to be undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women. Since each country had its own specific characteristics and problems, the basic preparations for the Conference should take place at the national level.

58. The situation of women in Ukraine had deteriorated during the transition to a market economy. The economic crisis, inflation, lower living standards, unemployment and other problems had a negative impact on women's health, the welfare of families and child rearing. The demographic situation had also worsened over the past decade. The birth rate was dropping and both the general mortality rate and the child mortality rate were on the rise. His Government had developed a long-term programme based on provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to cope with those problems. The aim was to provide legal protection for women and monitoring mechanisms. The programme would be financed by State funds as well as local budgets and funds from enterprises and organizations. It was hoped that the process of democratic reforms being carried out in the Ukraine would promote the speedy implementation of the programme.

59. Ms. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that democracy, freedom and human rights had made significant gains throughout the world over the past few years. Yet the women of the world had not fully benefited from that change. Real democracy was not possible without their just and equal participation in democratic institutions at all levels. An action programme for the advancement of women in the United Nations Secretariat was urgently needed. The Secretary-General's report (A/47/508) made it clear that the United Nations was not even approaching its goal of providing equal opportunities for women. Coordinated recruitment and promotion must be initiated and monitored, and targets should be set for each department with managers held accountable for meeting them.

60. In commenting on the situation of women in developed countries, she said that education for women was no longer a problem. Women who wished to pursue a career, however, were often subject to discrimination if they also planned to have children. Studies showed that women with equal educational background lagged behind their male colleagues in terms of leadership positions, a waste of human resources. Company policies, most often established by men, must be changed and more flexible forms of employment developed for the future.

61. Her delegation shared the concern expressed by the representative of New Zealand regarding sexual harassment in the workplace and agreed that the reputation of the United Nations could be damaged if sexual harassment

(Ms. Fritsche, Liechtenstein)

allegations were not treated seriously, expeditiously and fairly. Effective policies for prevention and a complaint procedure must be adopted.

62. Liechtenstein had recently concluded a revision of its family law and its Parliament had passed a Constitutional Act in August 1992 according equal rights to men and women.

63. In 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations would be celebrated, and the Fourth World Conference on Women would be held. In preparation for that Conference, progress achieved should be recognized, but so should shortcomings. Women's critical economic and social needs must be addressed as well as the vital role they played in preserving the environment. She commended the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for its successful efforts to address those needs in a number of countries. In the past year, UNIFEM had helped women to gain access to legal rights, education, health care, land, technology and credit, and, on the local level, to raise their living standards through increased income.

64. Mr. JAEGER (Austria) said that the issues of special importance considered at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women included the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the role of women within the family, the relationship between the advancement of women and human rights, the problems of women and development and women and the environment, the question of communications on the status of women, and the venue and date of the Fourth World Conference on Women. There remained, however, an urgent need for further progress with regard to the granting of equal rights to men and women. Austria attached particular importance to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, was concerned that about one third of member States of the United Nations were not yet parties to the Convention and hoped that those with reservations would reconsider and withdraw them.

65. His Government was very satisfied with the outcome of the inter-sessional meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, and with the elaboration by the Commission's inter-sessional working group of a draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. For the first time in history there was international consensus on a definition of "violence against women". Once the draft Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly, it would certainly constitute one of the most important international documents relating to the status of women. It might, however, be necessary to devise some form of monitoring system for violence against women. In Austria, several major symposiums had been held on the question of violence against women, and a one-year campaign was to be launched on 13 November 1992 by the Federal Minister for Women's Affairs. One of the planned events was an international symposium on sexual harassment and violence against women with disabilities.

(Mr. Jaeger, Austria)

66. In addition to its national initiatives, Austria continued to support fully the work of the United Nations for the advancement of women, and the activities of the Division for the Advancement of Women, which should be more adequately equipped with the personnel and financial resources needed to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.